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9/17: Health blog: How to overcome stress



By Jennifer Brown/Online Reporter

This semester has gotten off to a great start for me, and I hope it has for you as well.

We're in the middle of Week Four already, which means we have roughly 11 weeks left until Christmas break. Are you ready for your midterm exams—or even farther down the line, your final exams?

As stressful as these may be to think about, they'll sneak up on us sooner than later. I'm sure many of you have, or are getting ready for, your first exam. Here's some stress tips to keep your focus on school and get the best grades possible.

1. Get a good night's sleep. This doesn't mean that you should get four hours of sleep just in time to get up for your 9:30 a.m. exam. According to a [New York Times article](#), it suggests 8 hours of sleep to be fully rested and ready to face the day's challenges. Too little sleep, and your body may show the signs of depression, leaving you at higher risk for diabetes and heart disease.

2. Exercise 3-4 times a week. Exercise has always proven to help anyone sleep better, but there is a Catch 23 to this one. It's best to do it in the morning because too late in the afternoon or evening, and it will keep you awake. A brisk walk around campus or going to the gym is enough to keep your metabolism high and help your focus on what's important.

3. Take time to relax. We're all here at EIU for a potential goal in mind – graduation. However, this doesn't mean we have to study around the clock. Get out of your dorm room or apartment and take time to enjoy life outside of schoolwork. Go to parties, movies, concerts – whatever relaxes you and helps ease up your stress. This is especially important if this is your first time away from home; it helps you not miss home so much.

4. Eat a healthy diet. Fast foods and processed foods are some of the worst foods for the body. However, dorm rooms don't leave much creativity to cooking outside of a microwave. I suggest getting a George Forman indoor grill and frozen meat in addition to your microwave. You'll eat a lot better, and can save your meal plan dollars. Fruits, vegetables, and water are also 3 important components to have in your diet.

5. Ask for help. Take advantage of the tutoring programs, your teacher's office hours, and other students that may be willing to help you on schoolwork. Don't wait until you're too stressed out catching up on your own – it may be too late to catch up in the class. The earlier you go to the teacher, the more willing they will be to help you succeed in the course. If schoolwork isn't your stressor, there are professionals at health services who would talk to you when you walk in the door.

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